
Blighted Property Review Committee
Thursday, May 17, 2012
Determination Hearing
Meeting Report

Mr. Olsen called the Determination Hearing to order at 6:10 pm. He announced that a quorum was present

Mr. Olsen announced that the purpose of the hearing was to consider if the conditions of the properties on the agenda met the conditions set by the Pennsylvania Urban Redevelopment Law of 1945, as amended and the City of Reading Blighted Property Review Committee Ordinance, and could be certified or determined as blighted.

BPRC Attendance: L. Olsen, R. Corcoran, W. Bealer, H. Urena, M. Wolfe, Mr. Seidel

Staff Attendance: L. Kelleher, D. D'Auria, Esq., M. Reinhart

Mr. Olsen asked Ms. Butler, attorney from the City's Law Department, to conduct the hearing. Ms. Butler explained the hearing procedures and summarized the blighted conditions as set forth in the City's Blighted Property ordinance.

RECOMMENDATION TO REMOVE FROM THE PROCESS

Ms. Butler stated that the property owners have resolved the issues that make these properties meet the blight criteria. She recommended removing them from the list

- 1425 Montgomery St, owned by Albu Augustine, 660 S 17 1/2 St Reading PA 19606, purchased July 2004
- 217 Upland Ave, owned by Christine Wartluft, 126 Gerald Ave Shillington Pa 19607, purchased Dec 2004
- 1326 Carbon St, owned by Joseph Rader, Charles & Brenda Jackson, 1326 Carbon St Reading PA 19601, purchased Dec 1996
- 1809 Hessian Rd, owned by Christian and Mary Lisella, 1809 Hessian Rd, Rdg, 19602, No purchase date listed
- 1813 Hessian Rd, owned by Christian and Mary Lisella, 1809 Hessian Rd, Rdg, 19602, No purchase date listed
- 2257 Raymond Ave, owned by Citizens Bank of PA, 10 Tripps Ln Riverside RI 02915, purchased May 2011

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. Corcoran, to remove these properties from the process. The motion was approved unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION TO TABLE

Ms. Butler recommended tabling the following properties until the July Hearing:

- **1302 Butler St, owned by Gary Gettiger & Dolores Bennicoff, 1302 Butler St Reading Pa 19601, Purchased Nov 1998**
- **646 Brookline St., owned by Jason Davis, 646 Brookline St Reading Pa 19611, purchased Oct 2009**
- **2237 Raymond Ave, owned by McCrae Boykins Jr, 2237 Raymond Ave, purchased April 1997**

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Ms. Wolfe, to table these properties until the July Hearing. The motion was approved unanimously.

CERTIFICATION HEARING

Ms. Butler stated that the properties will be taken out of agenda order. The properties with owners or others willing to testify will be taken before properties not having representatives present.

1. 221 Colston St, owned by Dolores & Rafael Figueroa, 221 Colston St., Reading Pa 19605, No purchase date listed, Water service off, Electric Service off, Gas Service off, 8 years delinquent taxes, property maintenance violations

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Figueroa to step forward. A copy of the property packet was provided to Mr. Figueroa. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Figueroa.

Mr. Figueroa stated that he is the son of the property owners. He stated that his mother died seven (7) years ago and his father died seven (7) years ago. He stated that the property was left to him in the will.

Ms. Butler read the property summary sheet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on March 16, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on March 22, 2012
- Delinquent water charges \$1256.21
- Delinquent Taxes totaling \$3490 for 2009, 2010 and 2011
- Water Service off
- Gas Service N/A
- Electrical Service off
- Trades reports that the building is missing roof shingles and siding and that the

building is boarded up.

- Property Maintenance reports that there is \$1115.50 for 12 unpaid QoL tickets for trash and high grass and weeds and unpaid work orders totaling \$1991.50
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$487.12
- Liens totaling \$1855.61 for City property taxes, \$708.94 for delinquent water and \$729.77 for delinquent recycling

Mr. Figueroa stated that he is attempting to gain title to the property and that his siblings are not interested in owning the property. He stated that his sister lived at the property at one time, but moved away without notice. He stated that he cleared the trash from the interior and exterior. He stated that he has two (2) "as is" offers to purchase that he cannot execute until he gains title.

Mr. Figueroa stated that his correct mailing address is 2211 River Road, Reading, 19605.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Seidel, to certify 221 Colston Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

2. 1320 Perry St, Owned By Robert & Cheryl Tyson, 1320 Perry St Reading Pa 19604, purchased Aug 2005, Water Service Off, Electric Service off, Gas Service off, property maintenance violations

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Betances to step forward. A copy of the property packet was provided to Mr. Betances. Ms. Kelleher issued the oath to Mr. Betances.

Ms. Butler read the property summary sheet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on March 16, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on March 21, 2012
- Delinquent water charges \$2304.36
- Delinquent Taxes N/A
- Water Service off
- Gas Service N/A
- Electrical Service off
- Trades reports that the 2nd floor porch is collapsing.
- Property Maintenance reports that there is \$572 for unpaid QoL tickets for trash and high grass and weeds and unpaid work orders totaling \$1991.50
- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$375.61
- Liens N/A

Mr. Betances stated that the property was transferred to the Federal Government on April 8th and management was assigned to him on May 10th. He stated that the property is now maintained. He stated that he is working with the mortgagor to pay off the delinquent water charges. He stated that the property is listed for sale. He agreed to repair the porch and will pay the other delinquent fees. He stated that electric service has been restored.

Mr. Olsen inquired about the electrical status of the property. Ms. Kelleher stated that Met Ed reported that the electric service was off as of May 9th.

Ms. Butler directed Mr. Betances to provide proof that the electric utility was reconnected and to advise Codes when the repairs to the porch are made and the fees are paid to avoid the next step in the process.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

Mr. Urena stated that he will abstain from the vote due to his relationship with Mr. Betances.

Ms. Wolfe moved, seconded by Mr. Seidel, to certify 1320 Perry Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved with 5 affirmative votes.

3. 1425 Fairview St, owned by Keerty Ohri, 128 Colonial Dr Apt C Shillington Pa 19607, purchased Feb 2007

Ms. Butler asked Mr. Keerty to step forward. A copy of the property packet was provided to Mr. Keerty. Ms. Kelleher administered the oath to Mr. Keerty.

Ms. Butler read the property summary sheet into the record as follows:

- Notice mailed to the property owner via first class and certified mail on March 16, 2012
- Notice posted on the property on March 21, 2012
- Delinquent water charges \$142.02
- Delinquent Taxes \$1448.72 for 2009, 2010 and 2011
- Water Service off
- Gas Service N/A
- Electrical Service off
- Trades reports that the building is vacant and that a violation was issued for the replacement of the fuse box prior to the fire at the property. Building permits were pulled for windows, doors and drywall.
- Property Maintenance reports that there is \$1271.50 for unpaid QoL tickets and work orders for trash and high grass and weeds

- Delinquent Trash and Recycling Charges totaling \$294.59
- Liens totaling \$3355.47 for delinquent property taxes for 2007-2010 and \$550.18 in delinquent recycling and trash charges

Mr. Keerty stated that he purchased the property in 2008 and the property was vacant with no utility services. He stated that he owns other rental properties and was focusing on them. He stated that he will shift his focus to this property. He stated that the building permits were issued in May 2012. He stated that he has not had a QoL ticket during the past month. He complained that neighbors dump trash in this backyard. He promised to maintain and rent this property. He requested additional time.

Mr. Corcoran inquired about the date of the fire. Mr. Keerty stated that the fire occurred in 2009. He stated that the daughter of the former owner would break into the property and squat repeatedly.

Mr. Olsen inquired about the condition of the interior. Mr. Keerty stated that there was minimal water damage from a leak when he purchased the property. He offered to provide photographic evidence of the repairs as they were made. He stated that he entered into a payment plan to pay the back taxes in April 2012.

Ms. Butler encouraged Mr. Keerty to inform Codes about the progress he makes with this property to avoid losing title to the property.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

Mr. Seidel moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to certify 1425 Fairview Street as a blighted property. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Butler inquired if any of the property owners for the following properties were present:

- 1236 Carbon St, owned by Eleanor Keideisch, 1430 Claire Dr Birdsboro Pa 19508, purchased Dec 2008
- 1031 Amity St, owned by Kenneth Dinham, 1031 Amity St Reading Pa 19604, purchased May 2006
- 1715 Haak St, owned by Francisco Cardenas, 109 Cooper St Brooklyn NY 11207, purchased Dec 2004
- 49 Arlington St, owned by Rebecca Morrell, 129 Azalea Dr Berkeley Spgs WV 25411, purchased Sept 2009
- 513 Margaret St, owned by Jose Vega & Maria Gil, 519 N 11th St Reading Pa 19604, purchased Oct 2006
- 402 N 5th St, owned by Jennifer and Michael Aston Jr., 1201 Oley St Apt 1 Reading Pa

19604, purchased Nov 2011

- 249 Blair Ave., owned by Lorna Murphy, 80 Melbourne Ave 162JD Dover Kent England, purchased March 2004
- 1530 N 12th St, owned by Deborah Thomas and Tia Juanita Frye, 1530 N 12th St, Rdg, 19604, purchased July 2006
- 1401 N 13th St, owned by John Baez, 1445 Mulberry St, Rdg, 19604, purchased Aug 2005
- 820 Summit Chase Dr., owned by Catalino and Sarah Benitez, 605 15th Ave Apt 22 Newark NJ 07103, purchased April 1997
- 312 Heckmans Court, owned by Paula Felez, 445 W 153rd St Apt 4bb New York NY 10031, purchased Feb 2008

Ms. Butler announced that all these properties meet the criteria for blight as per the City's Ordinance.

Ms. Butler inquired if any one representing the following properties is present and inquired if anyone in the audience would like to provide comment on the following properties.

No one stepped forward.

Public Comment

Ms. Butler opened the floor for public comment. No one stepped forward.

Ms. Butler stated that each of these properties meet the blight criteria.

BPRC Vote

Mr. Corcoran moved, seconded by Mr. Urena, to certify these properties as blighted. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Kelleher reminded the BPRC that June is a non-hearing meeting month.

Mr. Urena moved, seconded by Mr. Bealer, to adjourn the certification hearing.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher, Secretary